



Local News RoundUp

November 1, 2013

REVENUE & TAXATION / FINANCE

[City Could Increase Fees on Development \(*San Diego Union Tribune*\)](#)

Facing what's being called a "historic crisis" in affordable housing resources, the San Diego City Council on Monday will weigh a measure to increase fivefold a fee on commercial developers. The proposal comes at a time that the city is out \$34 million per year in affordable housing money due to the elimination of redevelopment agencies, in addition to federal and state budget cuts.

[Budget Surplus Keeps County Courthouse Open \(*Camarillo Acorn*\)](#)

Six Ventura County cities will not have to foot the bill for the Simi Valley courthouse this year thanks to a \$1.1-million budget surplus.

The surplus is the result of \$60 million in funding statewide from the state Legislature, said Robert Sherman, assistant executive director for Ventura County Superior Court. The Ventura County courts receive almost 2 percent of those funds, which amounted to \$1.1 million this year.

[A Single Bill Covers Many Local Taxes \(*Lompoc Record*\)](#)

The county recently sent out bills to each property owner. Those companies that pay the most in county property taxes are Exxon and Breitburn Oil, United Launch Alliance, and utilities such as Verizon, So Cal Gas, So Cal Edison and PG&E.

The major tax amount is based on Proposition 13 tax of 1 percent of the property value when purchased. Increases allow for 1 percent per year from the base value.

[Poway City Council to Get Good Budget News \(*Pomerado News*\)](#)

Fourteen months ago Poway city officials were expressing concerns that the city would end the 2012-13 fiscal year by having to dip into reserves.

No worries now, according to a report to be presented at Tuesday night's City Council meeting. As of the close of the fiscal year on June 30, the city had an extra \$8.1 million on hand, City Manager Penny Riley writes.

REDEVELOPMENT

[Judge's Ruling Puts Livermore Regional Theater in Doubt \(*Contra Costa Times*\)](#)

A judge has rejected the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center's (LVPAC) request to hold onto more than \$120 million in redevelopment funds intended to pay for a 2,000-seat regional theater, putting the project in jeopardy.

[Brentwood Sues State Over RDA Funding \(*ThePress.Net*\)](#)

The City of Brentwood is suing the California Department of Finance (DOF), challenging its demand that \$15 million and nine parcels transferred to the city through the state's Redevelopment Agency Program (RDA) prior to its dissolution be returned.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

[Gov. Brown State of Emergency in Shasta County \(*Redding Record Searchlight*\)](#)

Gov. Jerry Brown today issued a proclamation declaring a state of emergency in Shasta County because

of the Clover Fire.

The declaration, available at <http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18286>, orders all state agencies to "cooperate fully and act expeditiously in coordination with the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency to facilitate the mitigation of the effects of the wildfire and the environmental restoration of the affected areas."

[Atascadero Appeals Withdrawal of \\$2.7 Million in Quake Funds \(San Luis Obispo Tribune\)](#)

Atascadero officials have taken a formal stance against a federal agency's July decision to take back nearly \$2.7 million in aid the city received to temporarily move its city hall offices after the December 2003 San Simeon Earthquake.

On Sept. 17, the city submitted its first appeal to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. It will eventually be sent along to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

WATER

[Visalia, Cal Water Settle on Water Rate Proposal \(Visalia Times-Delta\)](#)

After months of going back and forth, the city of Visalia has reached an agreement with California Water Service Company over water rate increases in the city over the next three years.

Under the settlement, monthly water rates for most customers would increase 17 percent starting early next year, a \$5.75 increase to the \$32.03 currently paid, on average by residents of single-family homes in Visalia.

[Cities Ordered to Pay Water Bill \(Long Beach Press-Telegram\)](#)

A state Court of Appeal panel has ruled the cities of Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey and Signal Hill must pay their underground water pumping bill despite having won the first round in a lawsuit against the Water Replenishment District of Southern California.

A final decision has yet to be issued in that lawsuit over Proposition 218. The four cities contend the district failed to follow certain procedures required by Prop. 218, including holding a public hearing for assessments.

[Plan Addresses California's Water Issues \(My Desert\)](#)

The state released a water plan Thursday laying out broad goals for alleviating a list of big problems, among them worsening water scarcity, uncertain water supplies, declining groundwater levels and contaminated drinking water.

The California Water Action Plan was prepared after Gov. Jerry Brown directed state agencies to develop a list of priorities during the next five years. While much of the 17-page plan is short on specifics, it summarizes objectives in an attempt to put multiple agencies on the same page and bring greater focus to the state's efforts.

CITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

[Cities, Developers Still Believe New Universities Add Value \(Sacramento Business Journal\)](#)

Several developers and cities see opportunity in what others call a problem for the Sacramento region: A lack of options in higher education.

[A Tale of Two Cities: Hotel Development – Sonoma vs. Healdsburg \(Sonoma Index-Tribune\)](#)

On Nov. 19, voters registered in the City of Sonoma will be asked to cast a ballot either for or against limiting the size of new hotels in Sonoma to 25 rooms or less, until occupancy in existing lodgings exceeds 80 percent in the previous one year period. The initiative, called Measure B, came about after a 59-room hotel, proposed by Chateau Sonoma Hotel Group on West Napa Street, half-a-block from the Plaza, began to go through the public approval process.

In Healdsburg, meanwhile, a luxury hotel chain called the Kessler Collection announced in August it had an option to buy a downtown parking lot south of Healdsburg Plaza with hopes to build a 60-to-70-room "boutique" hotel in that city. And while Healdsburg has been working to attract additional hotel development, there are dissident voices starting to rise there as well. Warren Watkins, who has contributed to the campaign to limit hotel size in Sonoma, has formed a group in Healdsburg called

Citizens for Sustainable Solutions, and may propose a ballot measure to limit hotel development in that city.

PENSIONS / EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

[Landmark Legal Challenge to Bay Area County's Pension Reform gets Day in Court \(*Contra Costa Times*\)](#)

In a potentially landmark legal challenge to Gov. Jerry Brown's 2012 pension reform legislation that has financial implications for thousands of public employees and taxpayers, state attorneys Thursday said county retirement systems had illegally included vacation and other types of terminal pay in their members' pension calculations for nearly 15 years.

[BART Strike Deal: How it Happened and Who Gets What \(*San Jose Mercury News*\)](#)

Details of the agreement that ended the BART strike began to emerge shortly after trains started running again Tuesday morning -- and it quickly became clear that unions won big pay increases, while management scored key reforms to begin controlling medical and pension costs that have spiraled out of control.

A day after BART management and its two big unions announced the tentative contract, those involved with the talks said the death of two workers on the tracks Saturday finally pushed both sides to put aside their differences. In the days since the tragedy, both made significant concessions.

HOUSING

[Simi Valley Accepts \\$60K Settlement, Dismisses Affordable Housing Lawsuit \(*Ventura County Star*\)](#)

A couple has paid \$60,000 to Simi Valley to settle a lawsuit that was filed after they purchased one of the city's affordable housing units even though they didn't qualify as low-income buyers.

Defendants Kevin and Kari Bosworth also agreed to find a replacement residence for the city to buy for its affordable housing program. The Bosworths didn't pay anything out of pocket for the replacement property, but their title insurance company did, their attorney said.

The settlement was announced at Monday night's City Council meeting by acting City Attorney Sonia Hehir.

In return for receiving the \$60,000, the city dismissed the Ventura County Superior Court lawsuit it had filed in 2009 against the couple and Mortgage Registration Systems Inc. of Simi Valley, which holds the mortgage to the property. The settlement money will pay attorneys' fees the city incurred to litigate the suit.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[Expert: Marin's 'Boom' Economy Near Peak \(*Marin Independent Journal*\)](#)

Marin County's economy will continue growing next year, but may be nearing a "business cycle peak" followed by a cooling housing market and slowing job growth in key industries, according to a new forecast by North Bay economic experts.

The Marin Economic Forum study, outlined at the annual "forecasting the future" conference hosted at Embassy Suites by the forum and the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce Thursday, says that while the county continues an economic recovery, it is "nearing the label of an economic 'boom' period." "The Marin County economy, much like California overall, is coming to a tipping point in the economic recovery since 2009 of a natural, cyclic peak," according to the study.

IN OTHER CITY NEWS

[Mayor Alan Nakanishi: Lodi Can Show Other Cities the Path to Success \(*Lodi News-Sentinel*\)](#)

Mayor Alan Nakanishi described Lodi as the proverbial city on a hill, setting an example for other California communities struggling to recover from the Great Recession, at the annual State of the City address Thursday at Hutchins Street Square.

[City Wins Award for Rain Garden \(*Elk Grove Citizen*\)](#)

The League of California Cities recently chose the Elk Grove Rain Garden Plaza as a winner of the 2013 Helen Putnam Award for Excellence.

This park is located on the southern part of Elk Grove City Hall on Laguna Springs Drive and across from Colton Park. The rain garden features low-impact development practices including a storm water management approach that collects rainwater for the garden's plants rather than let the water drain into gutters.